1997

# The race for change: an examination of the literature curriculum of one high school

Allison K. Woodward-Chartier
*Iowa State University*

# The race for change: An examination of the literature curriculum of one high school

by

Allison K. Woodward-Chartier

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of
MASTER OF ARTS

Major: English (Literature)
Major Professor: Richard Zbaracki

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1997

Graduate College
Iowa State University

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Allison K. Woodward-Chartier

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

_____
Major Professor

_____
For the Major Program

_____
For the Graduate College

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# INTRODUCTION

As the great canon debate rages on, students at colleges and universities are seeing an improvement in the choices of literature provided. The canonical works are not absent, they merely have stepped aside and allowed more voices to be heard. This thesis seeks to investigate if these improvements are being seen at the secondary level.

Specifically, the thesis will investigate the nature of the literature being taught at one urban high school at the ninth-grade level. It focuses on the curriculum by examining the short stories, poetry, and novels that are available and then which of those works are taught. The descriptive study will explore course offerings to see if teachers are balancing their curriculum for gender and race.

My questions over canon diversification at the secondary level come at a time when critics of the public schools, E. D. Hirsch and Allan Bloom, are calling for a cohesive curriculum, one that reflects national values. National values for Hirsch and Bloom are those on which our nation was founded, values set forth by white men of European roots. As defined by these men, multiculturalism does not play a major role in cultural literacy. In fact, Hirsch says of multiculturalism:

> Such study is indeed valuable in itself; it inculcates tolerance and provides a perspective of

> our own traditions and values. But however laudable it is, it should not be the primary focus of education. It should not be allowed to supplant or interfere with our schools' responsibility to ensure our children's mastery of American literate culture. The acculturative responsibility of the schools is primary and fundamental. To teach the ways of one's own community has always been and still remains the essence of the education of our children, who enter neither a narrow tribal culture nor a transcendent world culture but a national literate culture. (18)

Hirsch's assertion that it is vital for us to "teach the ways of one's own community" (18) means maintain the status quo rather than create a curriculum that ensures a truly national culture.

In Hirsch's world, students would identify with the values of the dominant culture and would reiterate the same information on a moment's notice. Though I admire Hirsch's tenacity and his hopes for a more rigorous secondary curriculum, I have problems with his underlying philosophy. Hirsch is basing his ideas on yesterday's United States. James A. Banks, in *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies*, says that by the new millennium one out of every three Americans will be a member of a minority group [xix]. By

2020, 46% of school-age children will be students of color [5]. Our national community is changing so much that the community that Hirsch wants to reflect no longer exists. If we are to reflect the community that surrounds us, then it is impossible to ignore other cultures. Any literature presented in the classroom has to go beyond European cultures and values in order to represent the cultures of the full community.

As both a graduate student of literature and a teacher of ninth-grade English, I worry that canon diversification will never be fully integrated into high school literature curricula. Those worries led me to begin questioning what was being taught at the school where I teach. What authors do we teach? What ethnicities are represented? Are male- and female-authored works represented on an equal basis? Are we teaching what we know, teaching what was taught to us? These questions led me to research exactly what my peers and I are teaching at the ninth-grade level. The reason is simple. As an educator I had to identify exactly what was being taught before I could suggest any recommendations for change.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Diversifying the literary canon does not mean a complete upheaval of the system as we know it. However, what is taught should reflect more than the beliefs set forth by the nation's dominant culture. While the school being examined in the study is not racially diverse, it is, nevertheless, important to bring a variety of points of view into the students' lives. Paul Lauter, in his book *Canons and Contexts* agrees. He says, "The central reason to read noncanonical texts is that they teach us how to view experience through the prism of gender, race, nationality, and other forms of marginalization" (162).

Before changing what we teach, we first need to understand how the canon was developed. Then, and only then, may we change our approach to literature. Lauter believes that the American Literary Canon was shaped in the 1920s. He gives three reasons why the canon developed as it did: The professionalization of the teaching of literature, the creation of a system that privileges certain texts, and, finally, the fact that literature is organized into themes.

The professionalization of the teaching of literature molded what was being taught. Lauter says that at the turn of the century reading choices were made by individuals, family, and literary circles (most had female membership). Slowly, those influences were modified. Colleges and universities began to absorb what existed in society and gained an interest

in teaching literature. Thus, reading choices increasingly were generated by university faculties who happened to be male-dominated. Lauter says, "Influence over reading shifted before the 1930s from women who were not academic professionals to academics, the great majority of whom were white and male. And reading choices moved significantly away from the range of female writers...who had been the staple of most women's literary clubs" (30). The professoriat, in effect, took over the reins and began to influence what was considered acceptable literature.

The idea that some literature is "good" and some literature is not is another contributing factor in the shaping of the canon. The shaping and perpetuation of the canon conjures up the image of a man behind a curtain running our literary lives. Although there was no master plan here, what did happen was that those in charge of teaching and critiquing literature tended to validate authors who appeared more like them. Since most critics and professors were white males, the canon they chose mirrored themselves. Lauter says that the literary canon is "a means by which culture validates social power" (23). History shows us where the power of that period lay; minorities and women were not in the conversation because they did not have the power in their hands.

Finally, Lauter states that the third factor that shaped the literary canon "is historiographic: the conventional definitions of periods in American literature, which were, in

the twenties, formulated by men" (36). Literature is framed into categories like "Puritanism" or "The New Frontier." What these categories do is favor those works that fit within their prescribed boundaries. Works that do not fit fall by the wayside. For example, Puritanism, as a literary category, "has been used to exaggerate the significance of New England, and particularly the male, theocratic portion of it" (37). This system of categorization, Lauter says, does not readily lend itself to the exploration of the Puritan life as a whole. Though teachers could study non-English settlements of the period or the role of women in the Puritan society, the standard and traditional literary choices usually perpetuate the male roles within the society.

Furthermore, academia still uses thematic categories as a way to approach the study of literature. Today thematic teaching has become a way for teachers to include women and minority authors in the conversation. The trick, it seems, is to choose carefully the themes that we use as an umbrella for teaching. Lauter suggests using more inclusive categories. For instance, "Colonization/Decolonization" would include more voices than "Puritanism" or "The New Frontier."

Lauter shows that the canon (obviously) favors white males. Thirty years after the current conception of the canon, women began to enter the literary debate once again, only with a difference. With the women's movement of the 1960s came honest conversations about the literary culture.

What happened to the women authors? Why were over half of the Earth's population being represented by such a select few? Emily Dickinson, the Brontes, and Jane Austen were a small part of the canon. However, their limited participation represented the elite culture.

As editor of *The New Feminist Criticism*, Elaine Showalter says that early feminists were concentrating on exposing the male domination rampant in literary criticism. They also challenged male critics on their stereotypical approaches to female characters and how they tended to marginalize women and minority authors. Since those early years of feminism, our culture, Showalter says, has become more enlightened. Critics, male and female, do not tolerate the literary misogyny that was rampant in the pre-1980s.

After calling the legitimacy of male-dominated literary history into question, feminists began looking at women as having a literature of their own. Feminists sought to free those texts that were marginalized by patriarchal rules. Not only did they reexamine texts that had been long left on the wayside (like Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*), scholars also began examining letters and journals as a way to gain entry into the female literary psyche. The steps taken by the scholars insured a reexamination of the canon. Women were demanding inclusion into the elite canon.

Showalter's text was released in the mid-1980s and gives a clear picture of how far the progression has come. The

progress of women in literature, compared to early in the century, is amazing. Women are not only writers, but are also in positions of power--critics, editors, professors. However, the anthologies and classroom curricula may not always reflect this advancement. Are women as advanced as they believe? Are women equally represented in the literary canon? No. Lauter's research shows women have made tremendous progress. However, men continue to be anthologized more and often are the focus of instruction more than are female writers (100).

In 1981 Lauter conducted a study of the content of the literature curricula of fifty colleges and universities in the United States. He "found that of sixty-one authors taught in three or more of the initial…courses surveyed, only eight were women, five were black men, and none were black women; other minority or ethnic writers did not appear in as many as three of the courses" (99). Of the top thirty authors anthologized, Lauter found that Mark Twain topped the list. Only three women (Dickinson, Chopin, Wharton) and one black male (Ellison) even appeared. White males filled the other twenty-six spots.

Moreover, women and minority authors continue to be omitted from the canon. Feminists searching for inclusion may be tempted to ignore the traditional canon in favor of a female-centered canon. Lillian Robinson, in "Treason Our Text: Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon," says that feminist critics should not create a counter-canon that

attempts to challenge the traditional literary canon. Instead feminists should be looking at the traditional canon and questioning its power. In other words, feminists should be questioning what defines a masterpiece.

Robinson says that before feminists decide to change the canon radically, they must first decide on the basic philosophy behind it. She says:

> Is the canon and hence the syllabus based on it to be regarded as the compendium of excellence or as the record of cultural history? For there comes a point when the proponent of making the canon recognize the achievement of both sexes has to put up or shut up; either a given woman writer is good enough to replace some male writer on the prescribed reading list or she is not. If she is not, then either she should replace him anyway, in the name of telling the truth about culture, or she should not, in the (unexamined) name of excellence. (112)

Although published fourteen years ago, Robinson's ideas remain valid. Until the canon is better understood, scholars will have difficulty making suggestions for change.

The idea of the canon as a social record instead of a record of excellence is an intriguing one. If the canon were looked at as a reflection of our society it would allow for more inclusion. Texts would be validated based on their reflection of the culture. The compromise is obvious. When creating a canon that is a social record some critics may believe that we give up the regimens set forth by the traditional canon, the idea that only great literature is admitted. Robinson says that this idea of greatness needs to be redefined. There can be a canon that is a social record while maintaining an institution of excellence.

Pam Morris, in *Literature and Feminism*, comments about the selection of novels for the canon:

> It would seem that 'masterworks' are selected and canons assembled not on genuine criteria of excellence, but on unquestioned gender assumptions and blindnesses of powerful male critics. Literary publishing and literary departments in institutions of higher learning collude with the construction of literature as predominantly male. (50)

Women, says Morris, are still being left out of anthologies. For Morris, it is not a question of how the canon is formed. Quite simply, it is formed by men, for men.

Morris, like Robinson, believes that creating a counter-canon is an extremely risky proposition and often serves to ghettoize female works. She writes: "It is only by insisting that women writers be included as part of the mainstream canon that we begin to oppose the construction of literary history as an all-male dynasty" (52). Women continue to be outnumbered by men and their inclusion is based on their adherence to the male aesthetic. Only those women who conform to the male writing norms have been admitted to the canon.

Both Morris and Robinson contend that it is a fine line feminists walk when attempting to deconstruct the canon. There are essentially two approaches to reformation. One, women can look at male-authored texts, criticism, and history and reread them, inserting the female voice. Two, feminists can fight for the inclusion of female texts into the canon. Again, the latter may lead to tokenism. Further, when fighting for the inclusion of women, which authors are to be included? Often, the authors are from the dominant class: white and privileged. Morris says, "Clearly it would be a travesty of feminist aims if the writing of feminist, lesbian, or working-class women were accorded only token or special-case status within a women's history of literature" (54).

Of course women are not the only group looking in from outside at the traditional literary canon. Other marginalized groups also voice concern over their lack of representation. Though universities have included minority literary works

within their curricula, often the works have been relegated to specific courses. Placing the literary works of say, African Americans, in a course on black literature and not placing the text in American literature courses, creates literary tokenism. Robert Hemenway in "In the American Canon" states that by offering only minority authors in minority literature courses universities are creating a system whereby students leave culturally deprived. In addition, he suggests that teachers of American literature who do not include minority authors on their reading lists are incompletely trained in their area of specialization. Hemenway suggests that "we press forward in our efforts to expand the canon, that we open the door even wider than before by including black writers in our standard English curriculum at every level and in every way—not just in the obligatory black literature class" (63).

There is no doubt that anthologies have come a long way. Certainly if an anthology published today were to be examined, one would discover more works by minorities than might be seen in an anthology published ten years ago. However, even if authors of color are being published, are they being taught? Hemenway questions their inclusion by saying:

> And does their inclusion in the anthology, given our notions of a sacred canon, mean that they have now been accepted? I rather suspect not. What may happen in the anthologies of the 1990s is that black

> writers will slowly begin to fade from the tables of contents, just as black writers began to disappear from publishers' lists in the 1980s and just as works by black authors now go rapidly out of print. It is an instructive sign of the times that when Toni Morrison appeared on the cover of *Newsweek*, two of her four books were out of print and unavailable for classroom use. (66)

The diversification of the literary canon continues to be a point of debate. The argument continues, in the minds of most critics, at the post-secondary level of education. If colleges and universities lack diversity, what about the secondary schools? Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* says, "Clearly the opening of the canon in traditional university literature departments has not yet affected the pedagogical practice of high school teachers" (91).

Gates made this comment following his reading of a 1991 literature study conducted by Arthur Applebee. Applebee conducted the national study for the National Council of Teachers of English; it is a comprehensive look at what literature is being taught in schools across the nation. He and his associates dissected the secondary literature curricula of our country and searched the offerings for race and gender equity.

Applebee's findings may be surprising to some. Of the eleven most-required authors in public schools, ten are male, one female, and all are white. Shakespeare, not surprisingly, leads the category and the only woman, Harper Lee, comes in seventh. The findings are startling. Multicultural texts are more accessible now than ever, yet the trend towards diverse texts is not showing up in the classroom. In fact, Applebee found that in grades 9-12 86% of the authors offered were male and 98.7% were white (60). The data collected reflects public schools nationwide. This means that even in schools with high minority enrollment, the curriculum tends to reflect the majority culture of this nation.

Short fiction in this country also favors men and whites. Only 27.7% of the space in anthologies was dedicated to female authors and only 18.1% were taught. Minorities were only given 10.8% of the anthology space with 2.2% being taught (96).

Ninth graders nationwide, according to Applebee's study, spend most of their class time reading works by white men. The four most popular book-length works for grade nine are *Romeo and Juliet*, *Great Expectations*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *The Pearl*. The most anthologized authors for grade nine are James Thurber, Carl Sandburg, Emily Dickinson, William Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe, and Robert Frost. For ninth graders then, the most popular authors include only two women, Lee and Dickinson, and no minorities.

Applebee found that "rather than a wholesale abandonment of the past, the literary traditions reflected in the authors whose works are selected for study have been remarkably resilient since English coalesced as a school subject at the end of the 19th Century. Shakespeare, Steinbeck, Dickinson—the list of most widely read selections is hardly a radical lot" (193).

The changes to curriculum, according to Applebee's study, have been made in short fiction, poetry, and nonfiction. Here minorities and women are beginning to hear their voices. However, it is evident that U.S. literature curricula do not reflect the population of the nation. Applebee's study makes Bloom, Hirsch, and Bennett seem paranoid. Where is the divergence from our national culture about which they are lecturing? According to this national study, we have not strayed far from our literary roots.

Applebee's findings are startling. How do my professional peers and I measure up against his national study? Mainly, what are we teaching? Are we perpetuating a male-dominated canon? Are the teachers the groundbreakers they claim to be? My fear was that I would find that we were not as progressive as we thought. In fact, I fully believed I would find what Applebee did: The high school English teachers at my school have broadened their scope a little, but not much. With this in mind I created a project in two parts: First, I conducted a descriptive study of what literature is

available to ninth-grade teachers at my school and what literature teachers are using in the classroom. Second, once our weaknesses were targeted, I sought ways we could reform our curriculum to include more women and minority authors.

# STUDY OF THE LITERATURE OF ONE MIDWESTERN HIGH SCHOOL

The main goal of this study is to survey what literature is available to and what literature is taught by ninth-grade teachers at one large urban midwestern high school. The study examines the anthology used by and the novels suggested to the English teachers. After determining the works offered at the ninth-grade level, the study examines what texts teachers choose to teach. Specifically, the curriculum is examined for both availability and use of minority- and female-authored texts.

## The School

The city in which this school resides boasts a population of about 190,000 and is primarily white. The school district has eight high schools; the one being examined is the largest. Enrollment for the 1996-97 school year was 2,016 with 625 ninth graders.

The representative school is housed in a middle-class neighborhood. Most students are residents of the area (85.7%), while the remainder of the student population is bussed from other neighborhoods.

The population of the school is mixed when examining socio-economic status. Data gathered by the school district shows that during the 1996-97 school year 18.8% of the

students at this school received free and reduced meals. There is also a population of blue- and white-collar households.

The total minority enrollment is 10%, by far the lowest in the school district. The district's minority enrollment averages 24.2% with two schools reporting over 30% minority enrollment. In the school being studied the minority groups represented contribute equal numbers of students. During the 1996-97 school year 61 African American, 69 Asian American, and 71 Hispanic students were enrolled in grades 9-12. Only 11 Native American students were listed for the school year. Though each group is about even in representation, as a whole they are still only 10% of the school's population. Gender enrollment was almost even with 51.1% of the population being female.

## The Curriculum

The ninth-grade English curriculum at this school is anthology-driven. Teachers do use supplementary novels. Though teachers are able to choose what works to use, they are restricted by the objectives they are required to teach. The literature objectives center on the students' mastery of literary terminology. The students take a district test at the end of their ninth-grade year to evaluate if the objectives have been met.

During the 1995-96 school year 78.3% of freshmen tested achieved 70% or above on the district exam. The students at the targeted school fared better than those district wide; the district had 74.7% of freshmen achieving 70% or higher on the test.

Students in the ninth grade are required to read about 60% of the time in the classroom. The remainder of the class time is dedicated to grammar and writing. Beyond required reading students are assigned two to three novels to read outside of class.

Incoming freshmen during 1995-96 entered district high schools with average scores on the 8$^{th}$ grade reading test. Overall, 71.2% achieved 70% or above on the test. This score is 3.5% lower than the mastery test taken at the end of ninth grade.

## Subjects

The subjects of this study are the ninth-grade teachers at a large high school in a midwestern city. The seven teachers range in age from 25 to 55 and range in teaching experience from novice to master teachers. The group is not diverse racially nor are men and women equally represented. In fact, the group is made up of six white women of European roots and one African-American male (Table 1).

Each teacher teaches five out of seven class periods per day. They are also allotted one hour each for a study hall

Table 1. Demographics of Subjects

| Teacher | Gender | Age | Race[a] | Years Taught (Ending May 1997) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | F | 55 | C | 29 |
| B | F | 47 | C | 23 |
| C | F | 37 | C | 13 |
| D | F | 28 | C | 6 |
| E | F | 25 | C | 4 |
| F | M | 25 | AA | 4 |
| G | F | 29 | C | 1 |

[a]C = Caucasian
AA = African American

and planning time. Of the five courses taught, teachers teach no more than two different courses. Within the classes they do have, class loads are kept at fewer than 25 students.

Teacher A, age 55, is a veteran teacher with 29 years experience. She is currently teaching five ninth-grade English classes, one of which is an advanced class. She holds a B.A. in English (with speech and drama endorsements) and an M.A. in Secondary Administration.

Teacher B, age 47, has 23 years of teaching experience. She teaches two sections of ninth-grade English and three sections of Debate. She holds a B.A. in English and has completed some graduate work.

Teacher C, 37, has taught for 13 years. She is teaching five sections of SWS English 9. [School-Within-a-School is a program designed to keep at-risk students in school.] She holds a Master's degree.

Teacher D, at age 28, has been teaching six years and teaches five sections of English 9; one section is an advanced class. She holds a B.A. in English.

Teacher E, age 25, has four years teaching experience. She is currently teaching two sections of ninth-grade English (one advanced) and three sections of sophomore English. She holds a B.A.A. in English Education.

Teacher F, age 25, is a fourth-year teacher. He is the only male ninth-grade teacher and the only English teacher of color. He teaches two sections of ninth-grade English and three sections of English 11. He has a B.A. in English.

Teacher G, at age 29, is a first-year teacher. She teaches five sections of English 9. She holds a B.A. in Journalism and has completed some graduate work.

## Procedure

Each teacher was given a copy of the Table of Contents of the literature anthology used in the ninth-grade English classes. Teachers were asked to mark the table for short stories and poetry they taught during the 1996-97 school year. Teachers also listed the novels they taught during the same school year.

Following the initial categorizing of works, each teacher was the subject of a follow-up interview. During the ten-minute talks teachers were asked questions surrounding their pedagogical approaches to literature. Specifically, how did

they reach a decision over which works to teach and what were the goals for instruction?

See Appendix A.

## Qualifiers to the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine what is being taught at the ninth grade level at one Midwestern high school. The ninth-grade curriculum was examined to see exactly what is being taught. This is a descriptive, not a scientific, study. I have included myself as one of the subjects. It is imperative to include all of the data since that information will be used to rework the curriculum presently used. Leaving out one teacher would not give an accurate picture of what is being taught.

## Terminology

Careful consideration was taken when deciding which way to label particular groups of people. The term *Caucasian* includes those people who are of European descent and are not Hispanic. The term *Black* was used instead of *African American* because the national origin of the authors and poets was not known ahead of time. In addition, Hispanic was used without the word *American* attached for the same reason. It should be noted that *Native American* was used instead of *American Indian* or *Indigenous Peoples*. Finally, the terms *Asian* and *Middle Eastern* are used as a blanket label for many groups of people.

Whenever possible the national origin of each poet and author is given.

## The Anthology

In his 1993 study of literature in the secondary schools, Arthur Applebee found that 91% of teachers nationwide used literature anthologies with 63% saying that the anthology was the major source for materials (85). Teachers at the school studied reflect Applebee's findings. They primarily use the anthology for short stories and poetry while relying on outside sources for novels.

The anthology used is *Elements of Literature* published by Holt, Rinehart, Winston in 1993. The anthology is 943 pages long and includes 22 short stories, 48 poems, 13 pieces of nonfiction, 4 plays, one epic piece, and one novel. The book organizes by genre. First come the short stories, then poetry, nonfiction selections, plays, the epic, and finally, the novel.

Included in the anthologies are two alternative approaches to teaching the anthology. The literature can be organized by theme. From "Coming of Age" to "The Power of Love" the editors group stories, poetry, drama, and nonfiction into units. The second approach the editors suggest is a multicultural approach. They offer five units that promote diversity. For instance, "Sources of Strength: The American Family" and "The Human Spirit: Survivors of Our World." The

anthology does make an attempt to guide teachers towards choosing diverse authors. The questions remains, do the teachers follow their advice?

## Results of Short Stories

The anthology presents fourteen male and eight female authors in the short story section. Of the 22 authors offered, 17 were white, three Hispanic, and two black (Table 2). Neither Asian nor Native American authors were included in this section. The United States was the national origin of 72.7% of the writers; two authors were from Great Britain, and one each from the Former USSR, the Dominican Republic, Ireland, and Canada.

Table 2. Short Story Authors Used from Anthology

| | Number Used | Percent of Usage | Number Offered in Anthology | Percent of Offering |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | | | | |
| Male | 14 | 73.7 | 14 | 63.6 |
| Female | 5 | 26.3 | 8 | 36.4 |
| Race | | | | |
| Caucasian | 14 | 73.7 | 17 | 77.2 |
| Black | 2 | 10.5 | 2 | 9.2 |
| Asian | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Hispanic | 3 | 15.8 | 3 | 13.6 |
| Native American | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| National Identity | | | | |
| United States | 14 | 73.7 | 16 | 72.7 |
| Great Britain | 2 | 10.5 | 2 | 9.1 |
| Former USSR | 1 | 5.3 | 1 | 4.55 |
| France | 1 | 5.3 | 1 | 4.55 |
| Ireland | 1 | 5.3 | 1 | 4.55 |
| Canada | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 4.55 |

During the 1996-97 school year, the ninth-grade teachers studied used texts primarily written by white male authors from the United States. In fact, 73.7% of the short stories used were by men, 73.7% were white, and 73.7% were from the United States. Five female authors were used during the short story unit compared to fourteen men.

Overall, it seems that during the short fiction unit subjects seemed more sensitive towards race than gender. Male writers make up 63.6% of the stories offered. That percentage increased to 73.7 when considering the short stories teachers taught. Minority writers make up 22.8% of the stories offered in the anthology. Teachers increased that percentage when 26.3% of the works taught were written by people of color.

Of the minority-authored works taught, two were written by African Americans (Hughes and Bambara) and three by Hispanic Americans (Soto, Alvarez, and Cisneros). Alvarez and Cisneros were two of five female authors who were taught during the fall of 1996; Bambara, du Maurier, and West were the other three women taught.

The offerings evened out when looking at the gender of the protagonists of each story (Table 3). Nine of the short stories revolved around a male lead character and nine stories were female-centered. However, two stories that are listed under "female-centered" actually place male characters as the primary focus as well. Capote's "A Christmas Memory" and Hughes' "Thank You, M'am" are told so the female lead is shown

from the male perspective. At the center of each story is a female character; however, the female character is observed by a male. In Capote's short story, a young boy describes memories he has of a female relative. In Hughes' story, a young man tries to steal from an old woman who later takes him into her home. Though the male and female each have major parts in the stories, the author places the female at the forefront. What makes these two stories stand out from others that are female-centered is the woman is foregrounded but shown through a male point of view.

Table 3. Race, Gender of Protagonists vs. Length of Texts

| Race of Protagonist | Gender of Protagonist | Name of Work Used | Author | Length of Text[a] | Taught by Teachers |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | M | Antaeus | Bordon Deal | 6 | 4 |
| C | M | The Birds | Daphne du Maurier | 20 | 2 |
| C | M | The Bridge | Nickolai Chukovski | 7 | 1 |
| C | M | The Cask of Amontillado | Edgar Allan Poe | 5 | 1 |
| C | M | The Most Dangerous Game | Richard Connell | 15 | 7 |
| H | M | The No-Guitar Blues | Gary Soto | 4 | 2 |
| C | M | Poison | Roald Dahl | 7 | 5 |
| C | M | The Scarlet Ibis | James Hurst | 7 | 4 |
| C | M | The Sniper | Liam O'Flaherty | 3 | 6 |
| AA | F | Blues Ain't No Mockinbird | Toni Cade Bambara | 4 | 2 |
| C | F | A Christmas Memory | Truman Capote | 7 | 1 |
| C | F | The Hat | Jessamyn West | 8 | 2 |
| C | F | The Little Girl...Wolf | James Thurber | 1 | 3 |
| H | F | My Lucy Friend...Corn | Sandra Cisneros | 2 | 1 |
| C | F | The Necklace | Guy de Maupassant | 5 | 3 |
| C | F | The Princess...Tin Box | James Thurber | 1 | 3 |
| H | F | Snow | Julia Alvarez | 1 | 1 |
| AA | F | Thank You, M'am | Langston Hughes | 2 | 7 |

[a]Average Length of Male-Centered Texts = 8.2 pages
Average Length of Female-Centered Texts = 3.4 pages
(Confer Table 5)

The average length of male-centered texts was 8.2 pages while the stories that revolved around women ran an average of 3.4 pages in length. In fact, five of the nine stories that center on female protagonists are two pages or fewer. Two of those extremely short stories are written by James Thurber and are variations on fairy tales.

When one examines the race of the main characters in the short stories that are offered one discovers that the dominant culture has resounding influence in the classroom (Table 3). "Snow," "My Lucy Friend Who Smells Like Corn," and "No Guitar Blues" each examine the Hispanic culture. "Snow" and "My Lucy Friend" were used by only one teacher while "No Guitar" was used by three of the seven teachers. The African-American culture was focused on in "Thank You, M'am" and "Blues Ain't No Mockinbird." As mentioned, Hughes' short story was dominantly used, taught in all seven classrooms. However Bambara's short story did not fare as well: It was taught by only two of the teachers. The only other short story that introduces a character that is a person of color is "Poison" by Roald Dahl. The main characters are white; a supporting character is Indian. The subtext of the story examines the colonialization of India by the British and demonstrates the subjugation of the native peoples by the colonists. "Poison"

was taught by five of the seven teachers. The rest of the works focused on European cultures and values: The main characters are white, and the subjects that arise are those that are compatible with the majority culture of the United States.

The most used of the stories were Richard Connell's "The Most Dangerous Game" and Langston Hughes' "Thank You, M'am." Each story was taught by all seven of the subjects (Table 4). "The Most Dangerous Game" is a story of survival. By portraying two men who fight each other for their lives, the author examines the theory of "survival of the fittest." "Thank You, M'am" examines the relationship between a teenage boy and an old woman who have a chance meeting on the street. While Connell and Hughes were well received by the teachers, three works in the anthology were left alone: James Ramsey Ullman's "Top Man," Pearl Buck's "The Old Demon," and Alice Munro's "Red Dress." Pearl Buck's "The Old Demon" is the only short story in the anthology that focuses on the Asian culture; thus, not one ninth-grade English class examined an Asian culture during the short story unit.

Teacher A, a veteran teacher of 29 years, taught nine short stories. Seven were written by Caucasian authors, one by an African-American male, and one by a Hispanic

male (Table 5). Seven of the nine writers came from the United States. One author from France and another from Ireland were included. Men wrote eight of the nine short stories. This teacher was about even concerning the offerings of male- and female-centered literature: Five stories revolved around men, four around women. Teacher A does not necessarily look for minority and women authors. "I look at subject matter--what will relate to the kids and [stories] that contains the literary elements I'm trying to get across."

Teacher B, a teacher of 23 years, taught eight pieces of short fiction (Table 5). One African-American author,

Table 4. List of Works Used, by Teacher

| Name of Work Used | Teacher A | Teacher B | Teacher C | Teacher D | Teacher E | Teacher F | Teacher G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Antaeus | X | X | X | X | | | |
| The Birds | | | | X | | | X |
| Blues Ain't No Mockinbird | | | X | X | | | |
| The Bridge | | | X | | | | |
| The Cask of Amontillado | | | | | | | X |
| A Christmas Memory | X | | | | | | |
| The Hat | X | X | | | | | |
| The Little Girl and the Wolf | | | X | | | X | X |
| My Lucy Friend... | | | | | X | | |
| The Most Dangerous Game | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| The Necklace | X | X | X | | | | |
| The No-Guitar Blues | X | | X | | | | X |
| Poison | | X | X | X | X | X | |
| The Princess and the Tin Box | | | X | | | X | X |
| The Scarlet Ibis | X | X | X | X | | | |
| The Sniper | X | X | X | X | X | | X |
| Snow | | | | | X | | |
| Thank You, M'am | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |

Langston Hughes, was used; the rest of the authors were of European descent. Five U.S. authors were used; there were also single contributions from France, Britain, and Ireland. One woman, Jessamyn West, was used while men authored the other seven works. The literary offerings leaned towards male characters: Five stories were male-centered while three revolved around a female character. Teacher B bases her selection of texts on the advice of colleagues and supervisors and takes into account what literature is student-friendly. Of including diverse texts, she says, "In this day and age I assume that you automatically look for multicultural aspects. I do stories that happen to be about different ethnic groups."

Table 5. Short Story Authors Taught, by Teacher

| | Teacher A | Teacher B | Teacher C | Teacher D | Teacher E | Teacher F | Teacher G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Race of Author | | | | | | | |
| Caucasian | 7 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| Black | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Hispanic | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Asian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Native American | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| National Identity of Author | | | | | | | |
| United States | 7 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| France | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Britain | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Ireland | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Former USSR | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Gender of Author | | | | | | | |
| Male | 8 | 7 | 11 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 7 |
| Female | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Focus of Short Story | | | | | | | |
| Male protagonist | 5 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Female protagonist | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

Teacher C, a teacher of thirteen years, taught a total of twelve works during the course of the short fiction unit (Table 5). Out of the twelve works whites authored nine, two were by African Americans, and one was written by a Hispanic author. U.S. authors wrote eight of the works taught by this teacher. Teacher C also dedicated class time to authors from France, Britain, Ireland, and the former USSR. She only taught one female writer, but four of the stories centered on a female protagonist. Of the eleven works taught, seven of the short stories revolved around a male lead. This teacher, and teacher A, introduced the most female-driven stories. This teacher finds it difficult to include authors of different races and female authors due to the limited nature of the material held by the school district. She added: "At other schools I used to teach *The Awakening* and *Black Boy;* here they're not available."

Teacher D, a teacher of six years, taught eight works of short fiction (Table 5). Five stories were written by white authors, two by African Americans, and one by a Hispanic American. Of the eight works taught, five were writers from the United States. Two of the writers were British and one Irish. Six of the stories chosen were authored by men and six of the eight revolved around a male lead character. This teacher attempts to maintain a balance for race and gender but says, "I even include [less desirable] pieces of literature to

create diversity. I do try to include other races but it's hard without availability."

Teacher E, a fourth-year teacher, limited the number of short fiction works taught to six (Table 5). This teacher used three Caucasian, one African-American, and two Hispanic-American writers. Of the six works, five are American; one author is British. She taught four male-authored works. However, the six short stories were split down the middle when considering gender identification of the main character. Three of the stories focused on a male protagonist, three on a female. Teacher E says she is very conscious of race and gender when selecting texts. She also concentrates on how relevant the work will be to the students' lives and the availability of the texts.

Teacher F, a fourth-year teacher and the only person of color on the English staff, taught five short stories (Table 5). Caucasian writers generated four of the stories; he also included one short story by Langston Hughes. Four authors came from the United States while one was British. Of the five works, men wrote four and three centered on female protagonists. At first glance his choices seem to be biased towards the male point of view. However, when looking at the protagonists of the stories, this teacher does include a female point of view. Surprisingly, this teacher does not specifically look to balance his literary selections for race

and gender. He instead selects texts that he believes will be relevant to students' lives.

Teacher G, a first-year teacher, taught eight works of short fiction (Table 5). Caucasians authored four of the offerings, one was written by an African-American male, one by a Hispanic-American male, and one by a white woman. Six of the eight came from the United States, one each came from Britain and Ireland. Men wrote seven of the stories taught and five of the short stories revolved around a male protagonist. This teacher says she relied mostly on the advice of colleagues when selecting texts. Though aware of diverse offerings, she chose works that had already been taught by established teachers.

## Results of Poetry

Though the anthology was more diverse in its offerings of poets, the European culture was still the most represented (Table 6). Male poets made up 65.2% of the offerings, Caucasians 65.2%, and 80.4% of the poets were from the United States. African-American poets had better representation than other minority groups with seven represented. Four poets were Asian, two Native American, two Middle Eastern, and one Hispanic. The four Asian poets were from Japan and apparently were included to represent haiku.

Overall ninth-grade teachers at the school chose to teach poems written by men (67% of poems offered), Caucasians

(56.7%), and works from American authors (80%). Of the works written by people of color, only one African- American poet was omitted (Nikki Giovanni) and neither Native-American poet was used (Leslie Marmon Silko and Gladys Cardiff).

Table 6. Poets Used from Anthology[a]

| | Number Used | Percentage Used | Number Offered | Percentage of Offering |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | | | | |
| Male | 20 | 67.0 | 30 | 65.2 |
| Female | 10 | 33.0 | 16 | 34.8 |
| Race | | | | |
| Caucasian | 17 | 56.7 | 30 | 65.2 |
| Black | 6 | 20.0 | 7 | 15.2 |
| Asian | 4 | 13.3 | 4 | 8.6 |
| Native American | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 4.5 |
| Middle Eastern | 2 | 6.7 | 2 | 4.5 |
| Hispanic | 1 | 3.3 | 1 | 2.0 |
| National Identity | | | | |
| United States | 24 | 80.0 | 37 | 80.4 |
| Japan | 4 | 13.3 | 4 | 8.7 |
| Great Britain | 2 | 6.7 | 4 | 8.7 |
| Ireland | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 2.2 |

[a]Two of the offered poems were by anonymous sources

Again, teachers seem to be more sensitive towards race than gender. Of the poetry offered in the anthology, 34.8% was written by minorities. However, 43.3% of the poetry taught by teachers was by minority poets, an increase of 8.5%. On the other hand, 65.2% of the poetry offered in the anthology is by men. That percentage increased to 67% when examining the gender of poets taught in the classroom.

As in the short story collection, Langston Hughes remained the most-used writer in the poetry section (Table 7). All but one teacher taught Hughes during the poetry unit. Robert Frost was also used by four of the five teachers. The women who were taught the most often were Maya Angelou and Anne Sexton. Each was taught by three of the five teachers who offered poetry units.

Table 7. Poets Taught, by Teacher

| Poet Taught | Teacher C | Teacher D | Teacher E | Teacher F | Teacher G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alvarez, Lynne | | | | | X |
| Angelou, Maya | X | | X | | X |
| Basho | | X | | | X |
| Chiyo | | X | | | X |
| Chora | | X | | | X |
| Dickinson, Emily | X | | | | |
| Frost, Robert | X | | X | X | X |
| Haines, John | X | | X[a] | | X[a] |
| Hayden, Robert | | | | | X |
| Helton, Roy | | | | | X |
| Hughes, Langston | X | X | X | | X |
| Inez, Colette | X | | | | X |
| Issa | | X | | | X |
| Kherdian, David | | | | | X |
| Montross, Percy | | X | X | | |
| Nye, Naomi Shihab | X | | X | | |
| Pastan, Linda | | | X | | |
| Randall, Dudley | | | | X | X |
| Reed, Ishmael | X | | X | X | |
| Roethke, Theodore | | | | X | X |
| Sandburg, Carl | X | | | | X |
| Sexton, Anne | X | | X | | X |
| Shakespeare, Wm. | | | | | X |
| Spivak, Kathleen | | | | | X |
| Stafford, Wm. | X | X | X | | |
| Swenson, May | X | | | | X |
| Walker, Alice | X | | | | X |
| Wilbur, Richard | X | | | | X |

[a]These teachers taught two poems by John Haines.

Teachers A and B did not teach poetry during the 1996-97 school year (Table 8). Teacher A did not teach poetry during this school year due to lack of time. Teacher B chose instead to conduct a writing workshop during which students wrote their own poetry.

Table 8. Poems Taught 1996-97 School Year, by Teacher

| Poet | Teacher A[a] | Teacher B[a] | Teacher C | Teacher D | Teacher E | Teacher F | Teacher G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | | | | | | | |
| Male | 0 | 0 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 15 |
| Female | 0 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 8 |
| Race | | | | | | | |
| Caucasian | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 12 |
| African American | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Asian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Middle Eastern | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Hispanic | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| National Identity | | | | | | | |
| United States | 0 | 0 | 14 | 3 | 11 | 4 | 18 |
| Great Britain | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Japan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |

[a]These teachers did not teach a poetry unit.

Teacher C taught fourteen poems over the course of the unit (Table 8). She balanced gender, but still was inclined to teach Caucasian authors (nine). She used both African-American and Middle Eastern poets. In fact, she used four African-American poets and one poet of Middle-Eastern descent. Each of the poets she used was from the United States.

Teacher C said in the follow-up interview that she believes the anthology lacks diversity. Often times in her

poetry unit she will introduce poets from her own collection. For example, in past years she has introduced Amiri Bakara and Gwendolyn Brooks. She has, also in the past, tried to introduce feminist poets into the classroom. However, she finds that generally "males in the class don't accept strong female voices." For instance, when introducing the poetry of Adrienne Rich she found that the young men in her classes were not open to discussing feminism. In fact, they were adamant in their refusal to participate.

Teacher D taught seven poems, only one of which was written by a woman (Table 8). This teacher used the most multicultural approach. Only two of the poets offered were white, four poems were written by Japanese poets, and one by an African American. Three poets were from the United States and four from Japan. When teaching poetry, one objective for this teacher is to find how the poetry parallels the lives of her students. Choosing diverse poets then takes a backseat to the content and its relevance to her ninth-grade students.

Teacher E, like Teacher C, taught eleven poems (Table 8). This teacher taught more male poets than female (seven to four). She included seven Caucasian poets, three African-American poets, and one Middle-Eastern poet. Two of the African-American poets (Angelou and Nye) and the Middle-Eastern poet (Pastan) were female. Every poet was from the United States.

Though a fourth-year teacher, it is her second year with this school district. "When I started here I found that the curriculum is definitely anthology-centered. At the last school I was at we had more freedom because we didn't have an anthology." At this school, since she is to some extent tied to the anthology, she looks for diverse poets. She gives the students background on the poet and then connects it to the poetry.

The lone man on the ninth-grade staff, Teacher F, taught four poems, all by men (Table 8). Two of these poets were African American and two were Caucasian. All four were from the United States. Teacher E looks primarily at the social content of the poetry instead of the race or gender of the author, choosing content over authorship.

Teacher G taught twenty-three poems, the most of any ninth-grade teacher in the department (Table 8). Of these poems, fifteen were written by men. The selections used by this teacher were more diverse than those she used during the short story unit, but she taught mainly white authors (twelve). She also included five African-American poets, four Asian, one Hispanic-American, and one Middle-Eastern poet. American poets wrote eighteen of the selections.

Teacher G tried to include as many poems as possible to give the students an overview of types of poetry. Though improved as far as diversity, she still leans towards U.S. authors of European descent.

## Results of Novels

The novels selected by the teachers favored white, male, U.S. writers even more than the short story or poetry units. The district recommends a total of ten long works of fiction (Table 9). While the titles are not required, the list is sent out by the head of language arts for the district as a list of possible selections. Of the ten works only one novel by a woman is included: *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck. The other nine selections were by white men. Nine of the ten writers are from the United States.

Table 9. Novels Suggested by District

| Title of Novel | Author | Race of Author | National Identity of Author | Gender of Author |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Animal Farm* | George Orwell | C | Great Britain | M |
| *Bless the Beasts and the Children* | Glendon Fred Swarthout | C | United States | M |
| *The Contender* | Robert Lypsite | C | United States | M |
| *The Good Earth* | Pearl S. Buck | C | United States | F |
| *Of Mice and Men* | John Steinbeck | C | United States | M |
| *The Pearl* | John Steinbeck | C | United States | M |
| *The Pigman* | Paul Zindel | C | United States | M |
| *Running Loose* | Chris Crutcher | C | United States | M |
| *Stotan* | Chris Crutcher | C | United States | M |
| *When the Legends Die* | Hal Borland | C | United States | M |

The teachers of ninth-grade English did not follow district suggestions when it came to novels. They instead chose seven novels, only three of which appear on the district's list (Table 10). Teachers only teach one novel per class. Thus, if a teacher is cited as teaching three novels, it is to three separate classes.

Table 10. Novels Taught, Suggested

| | Novels Selected by Teachers | Novels Suggested by District |
|---|---|---|
| Gender of Author | | |
| Male | 7 | 9 |
| Female | 0 | 1 |
| Race of Author | | |
| Caucasian | 7 | 10 |
| Black | 0 | 0 |
| Asian | 0 | 0 |
| Hispanic | 0 | 0 |
| Native American | 0 | 0 |
| National Identity | | |
| United States | 5 | 9 |
| Great Britain | 2 | 1 |

Overall, in the novel unit, the teachers chose white male authors (Table 11). The most read book among the teachers was Paul Zindel's *The Pigman*, published in 1967 (Table 12). Teachers also favored *Great Expectations* and *Of Mice and Men*. A few of the teachers opted for *Animal Farm*, *The Cay*, *The Chocolate War*, and *Durango Street*. With the exception of George Orwell and Charles Dickens, all of the authors are U.S. natives.

Zindel's *The Pigman* is the only novel offered with a female lead character. That character, Lorraine, is paired with the male lead, John. Zindel gives each gender a voice in his novel as the lead characters take turns telling the story. A male viewpoint is given during the odd chapters, the female during the even chapters. The novel tells the story of two

teenagers and their friendship with an old man. The teenagers, each from dysfunctional families, find refuge with their newfound friend. The novel is popular at the ninth-grade level because its characters and themes are easily accessible to students of that age.

Table 11. Demographics of Novels, by Teacher

| | Teacher A[a] | Teacher B | Teacher C | Teacher D[a] | Teacher E[a] | Teacher F | Teacher G[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender of Author | | | | | | | |
| Male | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Female | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Race of Author | | | | | | | |
| Caucasian | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Black | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hispanic | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| National Identity | | | | | | | |
| United States | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Great Britain | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Focus of Novel | | | | | | | |
| Male Protagonist | 2.5 | 1 | 2 | 2.5 | 1.5 | 2 | 1.5 |
| Female Protagonist | .5 | 0 | 0 | .5 | .5 | 0 | .5 |

[a]Decimal points for divided focus

Table 12. Novels Taught, by Teacher

| Novels Taught | Teacher A | Teacher B | Teacher C | Teacher D | Teacher E | Teacher F | Teacher G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Animal Farm* | | | X | | | X | |
| *The Cay* | X | | | | | | |
| *The Chocolate War* | | | | | | X | |
| *Durango Street* | | | X | | | | |
| *Great Expectations* | X | | | X | X | | |
| *Of Mice and Men* | | X | | X | | | X |
| *The Pigman* | X | | | X | X | | X |

Other than *The Pigman*, there is no other strong female lead. *Animal Farm* has a few female characters and *Of Mice and Men* only has Curley's Wife.

Two of the novels taught focus partly on race. Theodore Taylor's *The Cay* is a novel about a young, shipwrecked boy who loses his sight. The main character looks down on people of color but finds himself dependent on a West Indian man, the only other human being on the island. This novel, which examines race relations, was taught by one teacher (Teacher A) in one of her classes. *The Cay* was used in this case in Fundamental English 9, a course for students with low reading and writing skills.

*Durango Street* examines another culture, following a young, African-American man, Rufus Henry, who becomes involved with a gang. His parole officer tries to rescue him from a life on the street but watches as Rufus becomes the gang's leader. This novel was used by one teacher (Teacher C) in her English class designed for at-risk students.

## Discussion

This descriptive study will use the data to design a ninth-grade English curriculum that offers more works by and about women and people of color. As in Applebee's national

study there were not many surprises here. Literary works by white, male Americans prevailed and the values of the majority culture were examined.

It is important to note, before the study is discussed, that the size of this study will by no means speak for high school classrooms everywhere. Though the sample is small, the study is looking at one school for a specific purpose. That purpose is to examine the curriculum at this one school in order to make changes for this one school. Applebee's national study gives basis for comparison.

## *Short Stories*

The data from the study suggests that teachers are not as sensitive to gender as they are to race. In the short story unit women writers were used less than male writers. Teacher C selected twelve short stories, only one of which was by a female author. Teachers D and E offered the most women. Each taught two short stories by female writers. The female writers in this unit were not given the same amount of teaching time as males. In fact, only 26.3% of the stories used were by women.

When looking at the main character of each story, women were represented as often as male characters. In fact, half of the short stories revolved around female characters. "Thank You, M'am" and "A Christmas Memory" have already been

discussed. Each offers a female lead, but that lead is shown in relation to a male lead.

Two of the (extremely) short stories centered on women were written by James Thurber and were retakes on old fairy tales. "The Little Girl and the Wolf," at less than one-half a page, is a spoof on "Little Red Riding Hood." "The Princess and the Tin Box" is, at two pages, an examination of a materialistic young woman. The princess is offered five possible suitors and chooses the one who offers the most expensive gift for her husband. The story is supposed to be a lighthearted look at the old fable where the princess chooses the most earnest of the suitors, the one who will make her the most happy. It is designed to be funny, but since the anthology is lacking strong female leads this story might easily be avoided by teachers in favor of something with more substance.

"The Hat" by Jessamyn West is the longest of the short stories that focuses on a female. This story, taught by teachers A and B, is about a young woman who is extremely awkward in her attempts to gain the attention of a male. The story is funny and endearing and demonstrates the awkwardness that sometimes happens with adolescent girls. West does not make the female lead a victim. Though readers may find her awkward, the character is pleased with herself. She feels self-assured and capable of anything.

The short stories that revolve around men are much longer and in turn more in-depth than those written about women. Stories by men averaged 8.2 pages while those by women averaged 3.4. "The Most Dangerous Game," taught by all seven teachers, is about a man who becomes deserted on an island where a Russian general has set up a game preserve. The "game" is human beings and Rainsford, the main character, becomes the general's prey. Connell, the author, goes in depth about each character and examines their personal histories and motivations. Other selections about male characters are the same. They are longer so the reader is able to spend more time with the characters and can see their personalities come through.

The inclusion of women writers has not seen as much progress at this school as the inclusion of minority writers. This study suggests that in this school there exists a limited study of diversity in English classrooms. In short stories, with the exception of Langston Hughes, few authors of color were used during the short story unit. "Blues Ain't No Mockinbird" examines the African-American culture. Told from a child's point of view, the story focuses on the narrator's grandmother and her reaction when two men from the county come on her land uninvited to film an advertisement for the food stamp campaign. Told in a Southern Black dialect, the story gives an impression of the culture from an insider. It examines the disrespect towards the grandmother, her

perseverance, and the strength she uses when faced with injustice. The story gives the students a chance to enter a culture they have never been introduced to. The selection was taught by two of the seven teachers (Teachers C and D).

The limited study of race is interesting considering the demographics of the school. The community in which this school is housed has had an influx of Hispanic families from Mexico. The families have settled in the community after being recruited by local manufacturing plants. Many of these first-generation Americans are bussed across the city to a school that is equipped with a large ESL program. Those students who are proficient in the English language attend the school in the study. Though the number of Hispanic-American students currently equals the number of African-American and Asian-American students at the school, these numbers have increased significantly in the past few years.

Though the Hispanic population has increased, the availability of literary works by Hispanic authors has not. Teachers B and F did not offer any short stories that focused on the Hispanic culture. Teacher E taught two works by Hispanic women (Alvarez and Cisneros). The other four teachers taught Gary Soto's "No-Guitar Blues." This story centers on a young boy's life in Fresno, California and his quest for money to buy a guitar. "Snow" by Julia Alvarez focuses on a young girl's memories of living in New York City after leaving the Dominican Republic. "My Lucy Friend Who

Smells Like Corn" by Sandra Cisneros is written in first person and reflects a young girl's desire for a friend. Though all three stories are very short (four pages, one page, and two pages respectively) they do present different views about Hispanic cultures. Teachers would be limited in their scope due to the lack of depth in these stories, but each would give a starting point for discussion. "Snow" might be especially poignant because it deals with a first-generation American's view of life in America.

It should be noted that no stories about an Asian culture were introduced in the classroom. Pearl S. Buck's "The Old Demon" is offered in the anthology and is the only story that focuses on an Asian culture. No Asian authors are included. Buck's story centers on an old woman and is placed during the Chinese-Japanese War. Teachers, if using this story, could use it to talk about two different cultures and examine each for similarities and differences. However, the teachers in the study chose not to include the story in the unit.

Works by Native Americans were neither available nor taught during the short story unit. The only Native American even mentioned in any of the stories is in Dorothy Johnson's "A Man Called Horse," a story not chosen by any of the teachers. The story is about a man who encounters a Native-American tribe and shows the interaction between them. The story gives a Eurocentric view of the tribe and its leader.

There is no story by a Native American to counteract this European point of view.

Overall, it seems that across time progress is being made where gender and race are concerned. In Applebee's study and the school examined here changes to include women and people of color are happening, but the changes are by no means earth shattering. The easiest way to create change here may be to go outside of the anthology. Teachers do have funds to copy stories from other sources and may have to do just that in order to gain a true sense of diversity.

### *Poetry*

Poetry offers an excellent source for diverse points of view. The anthology used at this school still favors men over women, but it includes more minority voices. Poets of color make up 34.8% of the offerings in poetry, an improvement over what is offered in the short story section.

The editors of the anthology include more women and people of color in the poetry section. However, poets of European descent are still the primary source for poetry. Caucasian poets make up 65.2% of the offerings; 65.2% were authored by men. As in their choices for short stories, teachers taught poets of European descent more often than poets of color. However, the teachers improved from the short story unit. During that unit 73.7% of the writers used were Caucasian. That percentage improved to 56.7% during the

poetry unit. Teachers also improved concerning gender. During the short story unit 73.7% of the stories offered were written by men. During the poetry unit the figure improved to 67%.

African-American poets were the most represented among poets of color. Poets of African descent made up 15.2% of the anthology's poetry. However, the teachers increased the percentage by almost five percent. In fact, 20% of poetry taught in the classroom was authored by African-American poets. Of the African-American poets offered only Nikki Giovanni was not used. Hughes, again, was the most popular and was taught by four of the five teachers who taught poetry. Maya Angelou and Alice Walker were each taught by three teachers.

The Asian culture is represented in the poetry section. However, the four poems that are offered are examples of haiku and are each by Japanese poets. Thus, only one Asian culture is represented. Only two of the seven teachers taught the haiku form (Teacher D and G).

Native Americans were not well represented in the anthology. Nor were they presented in the classroom. Teachers left poems by Leslie Marmon Silko and Gladys Cardiff alone. Likewise, Lynne Alvarez, the lone representative of Hispanic poets, was also left alone by a majority of teachers. Teacher G was the only teacher to include her poem in the poetry unit.

Using poetry to insert female and minority voices into the curriculum is always a tricky proposition. Without diversity throughout the curriculum, using poetry as the lone way to diversify leads to ghettoization of minority and female poets. They cannot and should not be used only for window dressing. The poems, short stories, and novels together should reflect more than the majority culture.

On the other hand, it seems that the teachers are having a hard time inserting minority and female voices. Poetry may be a simple way to have these voices heard.

## *Novels*

Male authors from the United States make up the bulk of the novel offerings. No female author is available for instruction. [The district suggests Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*, but the text is not available at the school studied.] Every text available to teach at the ninth-grade level at this school is by (and mostly about) males.

Many of the teachers are teaching the same novels that they were taught in high school. Teacher D, who graduated from high school in 1986, says, "The core novels are the same. Ninth grade texts do seem to change more. Most of the classics are not at a ninth-grade reading level."

Teacher C finds the novel choices available outdated and/or difficult. Another problem is many teachers are attempting to teach the same novels. The school does not own

enough copies to go around so teachers may get stuck with a less desirable novel because that is the one that is available.

# SUGGESTIONS FOR DIVERSIFYING THE CURRICULUM

While there are definite shortcomings in the ninth-grade curriculum of this school, some teachers make an effort to bring diversity to their instruction. However, though teachers attempt inclusion of female and minority writers, they are spending the majority of time during each of the units using works written by white males from the United States. Though female characters are often introduced, there are few strong female role models. The anthology is limited in its presentation of female characters and the novel unit is completely male dominated.

In most of the follow-up interviews, teachers expressed frustration with the lack of diversity in the anthology and in the availability of novels. This last chapter will be dedicated to introducing possible substitutions for the present curriculum. The short stories, poets, and novels in this section were chosen based on certain criteria. First, the selections are easily accessible to ninth-grade students. The reading is on-level and the ideas are directed to a ninth-grade audience. Second, students can easily identify with the themes present in the suggested works. Teachers said time and again that this was one of their top criteria for selecting works of fiction. They say if the students cannot relate to the piece of fiction, they automatically tune out. Finally, selections were made for authorship and the characters. It is

essential that teachers be given choices that will diversify their curriculum. This approach will allow teachers to choose from the literature they already have access to and add to those works with choices that are more inclusive.

## Suggestions for Short Story Unit

During the short story unit teachers relied mainly on canonical authors. Noticeably absent from the short story unit were stories by and about Asians and Native Americans. Teachers need only gain access to some supplementary materials to balance the numbers within this unit. The following are suggestions of some short stories that would work within this unit. Teachers could pick and choose among these suggestions and pair them with works they already teach.

Hisaye Yamamoto's "Wilshire Bus" focuses on a woman's bus ride on her way to see her husband who is in the hospital. The ride is interrupted by a drunken man who begins to tell a Chinese couple to "go back where they came from." The main character takes comfort in the fact that she is Japanese and thus could not possibly be subject to the man's ire. Her relief turns to shame because she does not defend the couple. In four pages this story generates many topics of conversation: Overt racism, intraracial racism, immigration, and the debate over whether or not this nation is a "melting pot". This story would allow students to be exposed to an

Asian writer while exploring their own feelings about immigrants in this country.

Yamamoto also wrote "My Father Can Beat Muhammad Ali," a touching look at a father's failure to impress his two sons. When the man comes home from work his sons are arguing over who is the toughest boxer of all time. The conversation turns to javelin throwing and the father says he can throw over 300 feet. Under challenge by his sons he only throws a few feet sending his sons into fits of laughter. They go inside leaving him alone in the dark. Besides showing obvious tensions between generations, it is a bittersweet look at a man's need to still be heroic to his sons.

Toshio Mori's "Tomorrow is Coming, Children" would be another good choice for the curriculum. Told in first person, it is a grandmother's account of coming to America. As she is speaking of her love of her adopted country, she sits in an American internment camp during WWII. This story would allow students to examine the internment camps and question America's treatment of its own citizens during WWII.

Amy Tan's "Two Kinds" is taken from her novel *The Joy Luck Club* and, like "My Father Can Beat Muhammad Ali," it centers on struggles that sometimes occur between generations. This time, however, the rift occurs between mother and daughter and happens not in the Japanese culture, but the Chinese. Young Jing-Mei fails her mother when she does not practice the piano in preparation for her recital. Her mother

brags to everyone about her prodigy daughter and is mortified when, at the recital, her daughter cannot perform the simplest of songs. This story goes beyond mother-daughter relationships. It centers on a traditional Chinese woman who cannot cope with her Americanized, strong-willed daughter. This story gives two strong female characters that students can identify with and themes that are close to home.

Vickie Sears, a Cherokee writer, wrote "Dancer." This story focuses on a young girl who comes to a family as a foster child. She does not come out of her shell until she attends a powwow and meets a woman named Molly Graybull. The more the girl learns about her heritage, the more at home she feels. Since the curriculum is lacking any Native American writers, this story would be especially important to include. Teachers could focus on the Native American customs discussed in the story alongside any discussion of the literary elements.

Another worthy choice for the short story unit would be Sandra Cisneros's "The House on Mango Street." In two pages Cisneros creates an image of a young Hispanic girl who describes the house in which she lives with her family. One day a nun walks by while the girl is playing outside and inadvertently makes the girl feel badly about her home. She feels belittled and trapped. This story would not only help students understand first person point of view, it would also

allow them inside a Hispanic community through the eyes of one of its residents.

See Appendix B for more suggestions.

## Suggestions for Poetry Unit

During the poetry unit teachers increased their use of women and people of color. However, since the same use was not seen in the short story and novel units, the poetry could be seen as a token effort at integrating diversity. What will appear in this section are choices that teachers can make concerning the poets they teach. Instead of listing specific poems, I will discuss the poets whose work might be added. Then, if teachers wish to use one of the poets, they can look up the poems to see which ones best suit their use.

During the poetry unit the only Asian poets introduced were included to show the haiku form of poetry. Other Asian poets should be introduced in order to give better representation. Janice Mirikitani is a Japanese-American of the Sansei (third) generation. Her poetry gives a voice to an often-silenced minority: Asian women. She dedicates her poetry to giving a voice to Japanese women of her generation. The anger towards the Establishment is clear as she discusses racism and the Hiroshima bomb among other topics.

Native American poets were not given adequate representation either. Leslie Marmon Silko and Gladys Cardiff were included in the anthology. The selections offered in the

anthology by these two poets have not been regularly chosen by any of the teachers. The problem may be that the poems offered in the anthology are not easily accessible to ninth graders. The anthology does not offer selections from these poets that are accessible to ninth graders. That does not mean, however, that the poets should be ruled out for study. If teachers wanted to access more Native American poetry the most obvious way would be to include more poetry by those two poets. Silko's collection *Storyteller* is filled with poetry that examines the Native American way of life. Ray Young Bear would be another excellent source for Native American poetry. Not only would his poetry help students understand Native Americans, but also his tribe's reservation is within sixty miles of the school.

Sandra Cisneros and Gary Soto are two poets of Hispanic descent who are available in the anthology. However, neither is included as a poet; each writer contributes a short story. Each poet writes poetry that is easily accessible to ninth graders. Further, since the Hispanic population is growing at this school, it would be beneficial to include more Hispanic voices in the curriculum.

Since female poets are in the minority during this poetry unit teachers should think about including more women. Anne Sexton and Adrienne Rich would serve the teachers well. Since each of this poets use such a strong voice it would be interesting to see them paired with other strong female

voices. For instance, students could study Rich alongside Maya Angelou, Janice Mirikitani, Nikki Giovanni, and Leslie Marmon Silko. Seeing the poetry side by side, students could compare and contrast women across culture lines.

See Appendix C for more suggestions.

## Suggestions for Novel Unit

As with the short story unit, the novel unit seems to favor white male writers. Not to say that the choices are poor ones. *Of Mice and Men* and *The Pigman* are each novels that work extremely well in the ninth-grade classroom. The problem is there is no gender equity. There are few female characters and no female authors available to teachers. In addition, no authors of color are offered and only one minority character is introduced (Crooks, the "stable buck," from *Of Mice and Men*). The suggestions here focus on female authors and authors of color so that teachers may add more selections to their department library.

Cynthia Grant's *Mary Wolf* is the story of a teenage girl who struggles when her family becomes homeless. They take an endless "vacation" in the family recreational vehicle. Since her parents are unable to cope well with their newfound social status, they depend on Mary to pick up the slack. She begins to parent her own parents along with her siblings. As she watches them fall apart she dreams of a better life. That life does not come immediately because her father begins

drinking. His drinking and depression spirals him downward and he becomes a person Mary does not recognize. In the end the father holds his family prisoner at gunpoint and intends to kill them and then himself. Mary makes the ultimate decision of survival and kills her father in order to preserve her own life and her family's.

The most obvious element this novel has that others in the curriculum do not have is a strong female lead. Mary has to make the decision to grow up in a hurry and create a future for herself. In doing so she kills one of the people closest to her. Often it is difficult to get teenage boys involved in a story that centers on a female. This novel may not have that same problem. Mary meets people on the way, one being a young man. With that young man and the father in the picture, male students in the classroom will have as much to identify with as females in the classroom.

Gary Soto's "The No-Guitar Blues" is a popular short story with students and was used during the short story unit. Since students are familiar with his work, his novel *Jesse* may be a good addition to the novel unit. It is a coming-of-age novel, set in the 1960s, about a young man named Jesse. He drops out of school and leaves home to attend community college with his older brother, Abel. He and his brother work in the fields to afford an apartment and school. The story is resolved when Abel is drafted into the Vietnam War leaving Jesse feeling alone and disallusioned.

Soto does a wonderful job of placing the reader in the heart of a Mexican-American community. He makes the characters and their community come alive. This novel would give ninth graders a chance to look into a Mexican-American community and it would give Mexican-American students the ability to see themselves in the classroom.

Another novel that would be a good addition is Ellen Emerson White's *Long Live the Queen*. This novel, like *Mary Wolf*, would give ninth graders strong female characters who are absent from the curriculum at the present time.
In this novel, Meg, the main character, seems like an everyday teenager. She plays tennis, is readying herself for her senior prom, and has the same problems as most teenagers. The difference is her mother is President of the United States. She is thrust into a survival mode when she is kidnapped from school. Once Meg makes it back home, she must once again adjust to life in the White House. The story ends with Meg coming to terms with life in her mother's shadow.

The only down side to this novel is that it is engrossed in pop culture. It was written in 1989 and makes references to life during the late 1980s. The references will probably only make sense for a few more years before students will not know what the author is talking about. On the positive side, this novel is a good one to use with ninth graders because it has many elements that will keep them interested. The fact that the mother is President and what that entails, the

kidnapping, the return home, each of these elements will keep them reading. Most importantly, Meg is a strong female character who makes the decision to fight for her life, an image that is sorely needed in this curriculum.

Janet Campbell Hale's *The Owl's Song* gives a picture of Native-American life as told by a Native American. Fourteen-year-old Billy White Hawk has survived his mother's death and watching his cousin commit suicide. His father, not wanting Billy to follow in his cousin's footsteps, packs him off to California to live with his half-sister. It is there that he encounters racism worse than any he had faced at home. He tries to stay, but eventually makes his way home to his Idaho reservation. He makes it home in time to spend time with his father before his father dies.

Since the curriculum is lacking in any literature by or about Native Americans, this novel would be a good addition. Hale's story is layered with topics of conversation. On the surface there is Billy, a teenager without a true family, who tries to solve problems on his own. Deeper issues are the acts of racism against Billy, his sister's refusal to acknowledge her Native-American roots, the world that wants to stamp out the Native- American culture, and finally, Billy's quest to find peace. In this story, students could go beyond conversations about literary elements and really connect with the literature through topics that connect to their own lives.

Finally, Bette Greene's *Summer of My German Soldier* is always popular with students of this target age. Patty is a young Jewish girl growing up in the South during WWII. She grows up in a home with an abusive father and cold mother. In her search for love, she befriends and aids an escaped German soldier. When she is found out, the soldier is killed and she is sent to a reformatory school.

Though not a strong female character, Patty would be a character that many students can identify with. Themes about racism, abuse, family, and friendship found in the novel would easily connect with the students' lives.

See Appendix D for more suggestions.

# SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

This thesis has shown that in an urban high school the literature curriculum remains much the same as in earlier years, determined by a textbook with few women and people of color. Work still needs to be done to broaden the base of selections to include under-represented groups.

To simply add selections to the curriculum is the quickest and easiest answer to the problem. However, in some cases total restructuring of the curriculum may be needed.

Where might the changes take place? First might be poetry, by far the easiest of the literary forms to diversify. Since most of the teachers are trying present different poetic voices during the poetry unit, it seems logical to study a variety of poets. For instance, teachers could use a theme like "America" and show how different poets voice their opinions. Students might read Robert Frost, Nikki Giovanni, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Janice Mirikitani, all presenting different ideas about our country.

Teachers might broaden the range of short story writers as well. Many of the teachers, in follow-up interviews, talked about wanting to use stories that get their students talking. By using a variety of points of view, those discussions are more likely to take place.

Finally, the novel unit may be where teachers should concentrate their energies concerning diversification. Not

one female author was used during the unit and no novels by women are available to ninth-grade teachers. Teachers could use book funds allotted to them to expand the department library. By including female writers and characters in the curriculum, teachers would allow female representation in the classroom.

Teachers repeatedly spoke of wanting change. They see the need for change; those changes can be easily implemented. Teachers at the high school level can make the changes that will ensure that more than traditional literary texts will appear in the classroom. With those changes, secondary English teachers can see differences at their level. The canon in the high school classroom can be broadened so students can hear many voices, not just those that speak to the majority culture.

# APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name:
Age:
Years Taught:
Education:

1. What goes into selecting the texts for use in the classroom?

2. What kind of tradition have you found at Lincoln as far as selection of texts? That is, when you started here were you given guidance on what works to teach? Explain.

3. When discussing literature do you spend more time on the literary elements of the text or the social relevance of the content? What specifically do you examine in the content [character, society, relationships]?

4. Do you introduce authors/poets of the texts you teach? What facts do you share? Once you have read the piece do you connect it back to the author's life?

5. How have you seen literature change over the years?

6. When you first began teaching, what authors were you teaching?

7. Do you think what you were taught in high school or college has molded your approach to teaching literature? Explain.

## APPENDIX B. MORE SUGGESTIONS FOR SHORT STORIES

Bambara, Toni Cade. "Raymond's Run."

Jackson, Shirley. "The Lottery."

Munro, Alice. "Boys and Girls."

Ozick, Cynthia. "The Shawl."

Stafford, Jean. "Bad Characters."

Sullivan, Kathleen Ann. "Moment of Protest."

Walker, Alice. "Everyday Use."

Walker, Alice. "Strong Horse Tea."

# APPENDIX C. MORE SUGGESTIONS FOR POETRY

Angelou, Maya

Brooks, Gwendolyn

Clifton, Lucille

Dove, Rita

Knight, Etheridge

Kiyoto, Nigase

Momaday, N. Scott

Ortiz, Simon

Real Bird, Henry

Tall Mountain, Mary

## APPENDIX D. MORE SUGGESTIONS FOR NOVELS

Anonymous. *Go Ask Alice.*

Craven, Margaret. *I Heard the Owl Call My Name.*

Galarza, Ernesto. *Barrio Boy.*

Hoffman, Alice. *At Risk.*

Lau, Evelyn. *Runaway: Diary of a Street Kid.*

Mathis, Sharon Bell. *A Teacup Full of Roses.*

Myers, Walter Dean. *Fallen Angels.*

Paterson, Katherine. *Jacob Have I Loved.*

Taylor, Mildred D. *The Road to Memphis.*

Voigt, Cynthia. *Homecoming.*

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Works Cited

Anderson, Robert, et al. *Elements of Literature.* Austin: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1993.

Applebee, Arthur N. *Literature in the Secondary School: Studies of Curriculum and Instruction in the United States.* Urbana: NCTE, 1993.

Banks, James A., ed. *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1991.

Bonham, Frank. *Durango Street.* New York: Dell, 1965.

Cisneros, Sandra. "The House on Mango Street." *The Oxford Book of American Short Stories.* Ed. Joyce Carol Oates. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Cormier, Robert. *The Chocolate War.* New York: Dell, 1974.

Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations.* New York: Greenwich House, 1982.

Gates, Henry Louis. *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Grant, Cynthia. *Mary Wolf.* New York: Atheneum Books, 1995.

Greene, Bette. *Summer of My German Soldier.* Toronto: Bantam, 1973.

Hale, Janet Campbell. *The Owl's Song.* Garden City: Doubleday, 1974.

Hemenway, Robert. "In the American Canon." *Redefining American Literary History.* Ed. A. Lavonne Brown Ruoff, and Jerry W. Ward. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1990.

Hirsch, E. D., Jr. *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.

Lauter, Paul. *Canons and Contexts.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Mori, Toshio. "Tomorrow is Coming, Children." *Yokohama, California.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1949.

Morris, Pam. *Literature and Feminism.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

Orwell, George. *Animal Farm.* New York: Harcourt Brace, 1946.

Robinson, Lillian S. "Treason Our Text; Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon." *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory,* Ed. Elaine Showalter. New York: Pantheon, 1985.

Sears, Vickie. "Dancer." *Leaving Home.* Eds. Hazel Rochman and Darlene McCampbell. New York : Harper Collins, 1997.

Showalter, Elaine, ed. *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory.* New York: Pantheon, 1985.

Soto, Gary. *Jesse.* San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1994.

Steinbeck, John. *Of Mice and Men.* New York: Penguin, 1937.

Tan, Amy. "Two Kinds." *The Joy Luck Club.* New York: Vintage, 1989.

Taylor, Theodore. *The Cay.* New York: Avon, 1969.

White, Ellen Emerson. *Long Live the Queen.* New York: Scholastic, 1989.

Yamamoto, Hisaye. "My Father Can Beat Muhammad Ali." *Seventeen Syllables and Other Stories.* Latham: Women of Color Press, 1988.

Yamamoto, Hisaye. "Wilshire Bus." *Seventeen Syllables and Other Stories.* Latham: Women of Color Press, 1988.

## Works Consulted

Bennett, William J. *The Devaluing of America: The Fight for our Culture and Our Children*. New York: Summit Books, 1992.

Bloom, Allan. *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987.

Casement, William. *The Great Canon Controversy*. New Brunswick: Transaction, 1996.

Hubbell, Jay B. *Who Are the Major American Authors?* Durham: Duke University Press, 1972.

Lauter, Paul. *Reconstructing American Literature: Courses, Syllabi, Issues*. Old Westbury: The Feminist Press, 1983.

Miller, Suzanne M., and Barbara McCaskill, eds. *Multicultural Literature and Literacies: Making Space for Difference*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Oliver, Eileen Iscoff. *Crossing the Mainstream: Multicultural Perspectives in Teaching Literature*. Urbana: NCTE, 1992.

Peck, David R. *American Ethnic Literatures*. Pasadena: Salem, 1992.

Whaley, Liz, and Liz Dodge. *Weaving in the Women: Transforming the High School English Curriculum*. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 1993.